

Press Release

For More Information, Call:

Kathy Rea
Public Affairs Office, Huntington District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
502 Eighth St., Huntington, W.Va. 25701
Phone: 304-529-5771

For Release 4:00 PMEST
May 19, 2003

Corps announces partial deletion of West Virginia Ordnance Works Superfund site

HUNTINGTON, WV... Portions of a former Mason County explosives plant have been cleaned up, federal and state environmental officials announced today. Nearly 20% of the West Virginia Ordnance Works (WVOW) Superfund site has been deleted from the National Priorities List (NPL). The partial deletion of 509 acres was completed December 13, 2002, and is a result of cooperative partnership and teamwork between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 3, and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. This action constitutes the largest NPL property delisting in West Virginia history, since the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, commonly referred to as Superfund, was enacted by Congress in 1980. Deletion from the NPL means that the areas included in the Federal Register Notice of Partial Deletion at the site no longer pose a threat to human health, welfare, or the environment.

The WVOW, located a few miles north of Point Pleasant, produced TNT (trinitrotoluene explosive)

from 1942-1945 in support of America's World War II effort. Production of TNT resulted in contamination of soil and groundwater at the site. Much of this site is currently owned and managed by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources as the Clifton F. McClintic Wildlife Management Area.

The WVOW site is divided into 13 operable units and 10 expanded site investigation study areas. Six areas were included in the partial deletion. Investigation and any necessary cleanup of these areas are complete. These areas included the Operable Unit 11 - Former Sellite Plant, Operable Unit 12 - Former North and South Powerhouses, Expanded Site Investigation 3 - Tract 21 Area, Expanded Site Investigation 5 - Former Refueling Depot, Expanded Site Investigation 9 – Former Main and Outgoing Classification Yards, and the Wetland Mitigation Areas.

During World War II, the Sellite Plant produced a compound utilized in the TNT-manufacturing process. This area was later used by private owners for furniture manufacturing and mulch production. The North and South Powerhouses provided steam and served as a backup power source during operation of the plant. They were located adjacent to the Mason County fairgrounds and were demolished and removed in 1994. Some asbestos-containing material was removed from the private property known as Tract 21. An investigation for underground storage tanks was performed at the Refueling Depot, but none were located. The Main Classification Yard, originally used by railcars to unload raw materials, currently serves as the location for the Mason County Airport. The Wetland Mitigation Areas were included within the site boundary, but were not contaminated. They are areas where wetlands were constructed to compensate for other wetlands being drained as a result of cleanup activities.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the lead agency for the investigation and cleanup of the site under the Department of the Army's Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites. The Corps maintains a close partnership with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 3 to ensure that human health and the environment are protected at the site.

Copies of the Notice of Partial Deletion can be requested through viewed or downloaded at the West Virginia Ordnance Works Restoration Advisory Board web site located at the following URL: <http://www.lrh.usace.army.mil/pm/wvow>. More information is available by contacting Ken Woodard of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at (304) 529-5322.